

HABS  
CAL,  
36-SANBER  
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San Bernardino City Hall  
300-North"D" Street  
San Bernardino  
San Bernardino County  
California

HABS No. CA-433

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

## The United States Conference of Mayors and The American Institute of Architecture

CITY HALL PROJECTHABS  
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Name: San Bernardino City Hall

Location: 300 North "D" Street, San Bernardino, California  
County of San BernardinoLocated in the middle of the block between Second  
Street and Court Street, facing Third Street, East.Present Owner: City of San Bernardino  
Present Occupant: City Hall  
Present Use: City governmentSignificance: This area has been the downtown hub of the center of the  
City since the 1800's, from the days of the early settlers  
to the present city of over 100,000 population. One of  
the best City Halls in California has risen.The City Hall is a five-story, glass-sheathed building-  
sculpture designed to engender civic pride and reflect  
the urban environment around it. Internally, with the  
exception of the Council Chamber, it is a functional  
office building.Planning of the overall project began in 1963, under the  
guidance of a Citizen's Committee. The design contracts  
were completed by September, 1972.PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. The City Hall was completed September, 1972. Dedicated October 6, 1972.
2. Architects: (~~See Progressive Architecture, enclosed~~)  
Gruen Associates; partner in charge of design, Cesar Pelli; partner  
in charge of project, Dan Branigan; project designer, Lance Bird; pro-  
ject coordinator, James Lim; project engineer, Victor Preston.

Cesar Pelli - "Pelli has become known for his elegant handling of high  
tech in such buildings as Teledyne and Comsat, the Vienna Competition  
project and the American Embassy in Tokyo."

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3. Builder: Burke Construction Company

Materials: Exterior, 90% glass (bronze-tinted glass windows and dark bronze structural glass spandrels, bronze aluminum column covers). Interior, acoustic tile ceilings, aluminum panel and gypsum board walls, brick pavers and vinyl asbestos tile floors.

4. Original plans and construction. The City of San Bernardino City Hall is approximately nine years old and has not been altered from the original plans and specifications.
5. Alterations and additions: To date, there have been no exterior alterations or additions to the City Hall. There have been, however, a number of minor interior alterations. These have primarily been made in an effort to modify office sizes in response to changes in size and department staffing.

B. Historical Context:

The building is used strictly as offices for City business. The Council Chambers are used for organizational meetings and the yearly program "Lights Around the World," sponsored by the Council for International Friendship & Goodwill, features ethnic groups of the City.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Exterior is 90% glass with bronze-tinted glass windows and dark bronze structural glass spandrels, bronze aluminum column covers.
- B. Interior. Most offices are on the north side and, because of this orientation, have clear, transparent glass windows. The east and west orientations have very few offices that have small windows and the rest of the facade is made of non-transparent glass-faced panels. The south facade, most exposed to the sun, has no faced panels. On this side of the building are concentrated the common services (stairs, elevators, restrooms and mechanical shafts). These elements are also sheathed in non-transparent glass-faced panels.

The typical office floor is 217'-8" x 67'-8", giving a gross floor area of 14,460 square feet. Each structural bay is 41'-8" x 25'-0" and is designed with cantilevers so that two column support the structure across the width of the building. The long spans will allow maximum flexibility in office partitioning.

The common services (i.e. elevators, stairs, restrooms, mechanical and electrical rooms) are organized linearly on one side of the building with the public corridor next to it.

A 4'-2" module is used for all partitioning and structure. This module allows for a minimum office width of 8'-0" clear and a 4" partition.

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The all-glass curtain wall is also on a 4'-2" module horizontally to meet any interior partitions, 3'-1½". Vertical partitions are clear, transparent glass and run in horizontal, continuous strips in all office areas. The rest of the facade is sheeted with non-transparent glass-faced panels.

Basement

The basement is the most non-public of all the floors. Civil Defense Offices and a Communications Center for San Bernardino, the employee lounge and a small area for Civil Defense, staple storage and inactive records are located here.

First Floor

This is the main public entrance floor housing the main lobby and Council Chambers. The Council members' offices are in a mezzanine off this floor with direct access to the Council Chamber. These offices overlook the Chamber from the mezzanine balcony.

Second Floor

The second floor is the main public level of the City Hall where the majority of all public contact occurs. It is connected by a bridge to the five-level parking structure south of City Hall. Three departments, City Treasurer, City Clerk and Business License are together for public convenience and share the large public lobby. The Civil Service and Personnel Departments share reception, testing and conference areas.

Third Floor

The third floor is connected to the second floor by a two-level space and stairs. Building and Safety and Planning are located together on this floor and because of their close working relationship, share a public lobby. The Redevelopment Agency and Human Services Departments are also located on this level.

Fourth Floor

This is the Public Works floor. The Engineering, Street, Electrical and Refuse Departments are all located together on this floor to optimize internal operations and to provide convenience for the public.

Fifth Floor

This floor houses the Water and the Park and Recreation Departments, although customer payments to the Water Department are made on the second floor thereby minimizing public contact on this level.

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Sixth Floor

The top floor has the executive offices of the Mayor and the City Administrator. The Finance Director and the City Attorney are also on this floor to provide a close relationship to the other departments.

Materials

The major materials for the City Hall exterior are bronze-tinted glass windows and dark bronze structural glass spandrels, bronze aluminum column covers; interior, acoustic tile ceilings, aluminum panel and gypsum board walls, brick pavers and vinyl asbestos tile floors.

C. Site

The building was designed as an object within an urban park. A series of pools cascade down through this park from a high point on "E" Street down to the sidewalk on "D" Street. The white cascading water adds a freshness particularly desirable in the warm San Bernardino climate. Around the structure are tall eucalyptus and sycamore trees, lawns, and large paved areas. Benches and other sitting surfaces are abundantly located within the park, e.g. there is a continuous sitting platform around the series of pools.

PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. The architectural drawings for the San Bernardino City Hall were completed in July, 1970, and are located in the archives of the City Redevelopment Agency on the third level of City Hall.
- B. ~~Enclosed are photographs from Gruen Associates, newspaper articles, excerpts from council minutes, and architectural brochures.~~

Prepared by Thelma Press, assisted by Vincent Bautista